

THE CHRONICLE

Coach House Museum

Newsletter of The Coach House Museum

November 2025

In association with Feilding & Districts Community Archive



Henry Jefferies kept this keepsake of his time at the Colyton Butter Factory. His grandson Des Jefferies said that it has always sat on display in their home. It is now on display at the museum.

FIRE AT COLYTON

BUTTER FACTORY DESTROYED

Mr H. Gillies' butter factory at Colyton was totally destroyed by fire last night. Just after 9 o'clock, Mr James Lang saw the fire from the Colyton corner, and he and several others hastened to the scene. When they reached the factory, about a quarter of a mile away, flames were bursting out through the roof and walls, and it was impossible to save anything.

The factory was only a small one, but the plant was valuable, and the damage by the fire will be considerable.

Above: Colyton Butter Factory Stamp.

Left: News article in the Feilding Star, Volume VII, Issue 1866, 4 September 1912, Page 2 (Papers Past)

Mr Gillies, the owner, lives in Palmerston, and went home as usual yesterday after work. He was communicated with last night, and hurried out to Colyton, but of course could do nothing.

It is understood the factory was insured, but the amount of cover is not available.



Written on back of photograph: H Jefferies, Milk factory near Colyton
 Left to Right: 1· Henry Jefferies 2· Fred Burton 3· ? 4· ? 5· Jack Gillies owner
 6· John Wryatt with whiskers pronounced Rat 7· ? 8· ?



Living in the 1500s Most people got married in June because they took their yearly bath in May, and they still smelled pretty good by June. However, since they were starting to smell, brides carried bouquet of flowers to hide the body odour. Hence the custom today of carrying a bouquet when getting married. Baths consisted of a big tub filled with hot water. The man of the house had the privilege of the nice clean water, then all the other sons and men, then the women and finally the children. Last of all, the babies. By then the water was so dirty you could actually lose someone in it. Hence the saying, "Don't throw the baby out with the Bath water!"



First aeroplane (De Havilland 6) arriving at the old Feilding racecourse, August 1920, piloted by Captain Richard Russell. Photographed by Bert Hobday - who flew in the aeroplane later that day, taking the first aerial photos of Feilding. Captain Russell, who was from Invercargill, had been awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Croix de Guerre during WWI - he spent his time after the war touring around New Zealand in his plane and offering flights to civilians in an effort to popularise flying. Tragically, Captain Russell was killed during one of these tours, when his Avro Avian plane stalled while descending onto the New Plymouth Racecourse in November 1920. Two passengers were also killed; Mayor James Clark, and chemist Kathleen Warnock.

Lieutenant J.J. Hammond, the Feilding-born aviation pioneer, shown with the Britannia aircraft with which he made historic flights over Auckland in 1914. He was the first New Zealander to obtain his Flying Certificate in October 1910. Hammond made the first cross-country flights in Australia, 1911. Although surviving several crash landings during his career, Hammond was killed in a flying accident in the United States, where he was engaged as a flying instructor, on September 23, 1918 aged 32.



DIARY OF CHARLOTTE COUCHMAN

VOYAGE OF THE 'ARATHUSA' OCTOBER 28TH TO NOVEMBER 5TH 1879

Tuesday. Still very cold. Going at a rapid rate.

Wednesday. Still the same. I have just done a week's washing. I never thought I could wash in cold water and this hard water too. I am almost frozen to death. It is full moon and looks beautiful over the sea with such a lot of birds flying over us. The albatross are very large when they throw their wings wide open they measure 10 and 12 feet across their body and wings, and if they once get on the deck of the ship they cannot fly up again, so they are caught.

Wednesday. Eight weeks today since we sailed out of Plymouth. This is very cold. It feels like snow, but we have daylight at 4 in the morning and not dark till aft 8 at night.

Thursday. Still bitterly cold and the sea beats mountains high and we cut through the water fine. Good night.

Friday. Still as cold as ever.

Saturday. Another funeral of the twins that were born a week ago. Poor little things. They were both sew up in canvas together and thrown overboard. I hope we shall not have much more of this – it is heart – rending.

Sunday. Nov. 2nd. We feel the cold more that ever and no fire to cheer us up. We dare not go into the galley it is strictly forbidden. The poor little babies do cry with the cold. I shall be glad when we get into a little warmer climate. We are getting up a tea party for the 5th of November. The only way they can celebrate it here.

Tuesday. This is worse that ever. We pitch and toss at such a rate. It don't seem possible, that we can get through this sea – God help us!

Wednesday 5th. Still heavy swell on. This is Horace's birthday. He is 18 today. The water comes clean over the deck and down upon us like heavy claps of thunder. It is not safe for any of us to go on deck. There are several children with broken limbs for they will go in defiance of everybody. We turn in to our bunks quite early to keep warm for it is so cold we cannot feel anything. Our finger and feet are numbed. We have a heavy fall of snow and hail today and the men are catching the albatross for they are tired out and keep falling on the deck. They are splendid birds. They skin them and throw the bodies away while the plumage they keep for sale, and the quills in the wings they make pipe stems of. I have got a fine large skin given me to maker Jane a set of furs. The first mate had it dressed and nailed out on a board to dry it. I am afraid we shall have a rough night. We toss about fearfully.